

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION**

**FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- At least one certified owner/employee per food facility by 1/1/2001
- Certification is applicable to only one facility
- Certification exam required; review class/books are optional
- Certified person need not be present during all hours of operation
- All certificates will expire after 3 years from the issuance date
- 60 days to obtain new certification for ownership change/certified person departure
- Failure to obtain the certification may result in revocation facility's health permit
- **Food Handler test/card is still required for all foodhandlers, if the foodhandler does not have the food safety certification.**

**Certification required for the following businesses:**

- All food establishments (sec 113780) at which unpackaged foods are prepared, handled or served. (includes ice, popcorn, hotdogs, etc)
- Mobile food prep units (sec 113815)
- Stationary mobile food prep units (sec 113890)
- Commissary (sec 113750)
- Catering

**Certification not required:**

- Wholesale operation
- School district, county office of education, community college if entity voluntarily participates in the DEH food safety program.
- Mobile food facility (push carts)
- Satellite food distribution facility
- Temporary food facility, certified farmers market, winegrower premises

Multiple contiguous food facilities permitted within the same site and under the same management, ownership or control shall be deemed to be one food facility. (Contiguous = adjacent or touching). This is applicable to a food court operated by one entity. Noncontiguous food facilities at stadiums, airports and other large venues will require separate certified owners/employees. Individual food facilities/franchises operated by separate vendors at places such as a mall would require a certified owner/employee for each facility.

An employee with a valid food safety certification is considered to meet county food handler requirements. The certified person does not need to have both documents.

The state recognized food safety certification examinations are ServSafe, Chauncey Group, Experior (formerly National Assessment Institute), Professional Testing, and Dietary Managers' Association.

If you have any questions, please contact (619) 338-2379 or email [fhduyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:fhduyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov)